

Ballona Wetlands

Interim Stewardship and Access Management Plan

Prepared for State Coastal Conservancy,
Department of Fish and Game
and State Lands Commission

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I. INTRODUCTION

Vision for Community Stewardship

The State of California acquired the Ballona Wetlands in 2003 and 2004 because it is one of the most significant wetland resources in Southern California. Following its acquisition, the State Coastal Conservancy (SCC), in collaboration with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), State Lands Commission (SLC), and other agencies, as well as various community and conservation organizations, began the wetland restoration planning process.

The Interim Stewardship and Access Management Plan is the first visible step in a series of planning efforts for the Ballona Wetlands. This working plan is intended to serve as a guide to manage short-term access, restoration and educational opportunities now and over the next three plus years, through the completion of the Wetland Restoration Plan.

The long-term Wetland Restoration Plan will be developed to restore and enhance the natural resources of the site and to create compatible public access opportunities.

The development of the Wetland Restoration Plan, guided by adaptive management principles, will offer a long-range vision for a healthy Ballona Wetlands. This vision requires broad community support and participation, for only through community stewardship will wetland improvements be maintained in perpetuity.

Goals

- Create a handbook and a working plan for short-term stewardship and access over the next 3+ years.
- Provide public access and recreation opportunities, compatible with habitat, fish and wildlife conservation.
- Encourage public appreciation of Ballona Wetlands.
- Develop a functional equivalent of a DFG Land Management Plan for the near-term until the final plan is adopted.
- Compliment and advance existing activities being undertaken within Ballona Wetlands.
- Redirect non-complementary uses and activities related to the health of Ballona Wetlands.
- Develop and utilize signage in a form and scale appropriate to the setting and need for restoration and visitor education.
- Facilitate trash management.

Guiding Principles

- **Build on what is working now** — the ability of projects and programs to build on already successful efforts.
- **Enhance partnering and improve working relationships** — build on the existing strengths of community non profits and encourage joint problem solving and public-private partnerships.
- **Encourage operational simplicity** — undertake programs and projects that facilitate monitoring and management without complex arrangements.
- **Provide linkages to other ongoing or emerging efforts being undertaken in the watershed** — encourage communication between agencies and organizations working in the Ballona Watershed.
- **Don't compromise future restoration efforts** — work smart, focus interim stewardship efforts on projects that will be consistent with and supportive of the long term restoration plan.
- **Leverage projects for their educational and interpretive aspects** — provide teaching tools and articulate lessons learned with each undertaking within the wetlands.
- **Offer an appropriate level of managed community access** — provide a balance of resource protection, public safety and passive recreation.



Aerial of Planning Area

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Description of Physical Setting

1. The Ballona Wetlands planning area is the last remaining 600 acres of historic wetlands at the base of the Ballona Creek watershed. It drains a total of 130 square miles of highly urbanized area. While the Ballona Wetlands ecosystem has been substantially degraded over the years due to human activity and urban development, it is still a rich ecological system that bridges the gap between aquatic and land environments and provides crucial habitat for hundreds of plant and animal species, including Belding's Savannah Sparrow, an Endangered species. Within the wetlands many different habitat types occur including:

- Open water
- Saltwater Marsh/wetland
- Freshwater Marsh/wetland
- Dunes
- Upland - coastal sage scrub, southern fore dune and non-native annual grassland.
- Urbanized/recreation

2. The Ballona Wetlands is divided into three parcels, areas A and B (west of Lincoln Boulevard) and area C (east of Lincoln Boulevard).

3. Existing relationships to surrounding uses are:
- Nearby open spaces
 - State beaches at Venice, Santa Monica and Dockweiler
 - Marina Del Rey
 - Burton Chase Park
 - Del Rey Lagoon
 - Baldwin Hills including Kenneth Hahn State Recreational Area.
 - Residential uses impact wetland area through formal and informal access as well as storm-water drainage.
 - Bikeway network links perimeter of wetlands to surrounding neighborhoods.

4. Environmental Assets
- Adjacent to estuary at the mouth of Ballona Creek/Marina Del Rey.
 - Subject to tidal action and seasonal rainfall.
 - Largest remaining coastal estuary/wetland habitat within Los Angeles Basin.
 - Nearby Endangered species habitat include

- Least Tern habitat on beach north of Ballona Creek, and El Segundo Blue butterfly habitat west of LAX, as well as rare dune beach and bluffs extending south of Ballona Wetlands to Palos Verdes Peninsula.
- Culturally sensitive archaeological sites.

The Ballona Wetlands is divided into three parcels, areas A, B and C.



Area A



Area B



Area C

Management Environment

1. Ballona Wetlands, areas A, portions of B, and C are in public ownership under the stewardship of DFG. Two areas in B, known as the Freshwater Marsh and the Expanded Wetlands parcel, are under the jurisdiction of the SLC. The Ballona Wetlands Conservancy (BWC) holds a conservation easement over the Freshwater Marsh.

2. Current activities, which are regulated by Access Agreements between DFG and authorized users/stewards must be consistent with:

- DFG habitat protection mission
- restoration and enhancement goals
- existing regulations
- wildlife needs
- safety of users
- adverse-free impacts on sensitive species and habitats.

3. Interim stewardship and access management is being coordinated by the SCC, DFG and SLC.

4. Future Restoration efforts will be guided by the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Plan being developed jointly by SCC, DFG and SLC.

5. Ecological Reserve (ER) designation being pursued by DFG to provide:

- protection for rare, threatened and Endangered species
- compatible public entry and use such as:
 - pedestrian use on designated trails only
 - bicycle use on north side of creek channel
 - fishing from shore in designated areas
 - recreational use under current lease to Playa Vista Little League
 - parking areas in existing lots under lease to Los Angeles County until restoration is determined appropriate

Current Usage

General Uses

- habitat restoration
- educational tours and field trips
- scientific research and monitoring
- active recreation
- supervised public access

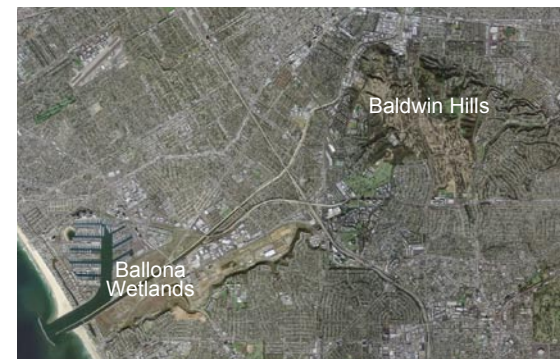
Types of Uses

- Birding and bird counts: Audubon Society and Wetlands Action Network .
- Dune restoration: Friends of Ballona Wetlands.
- Environmental education, tours and school field trips (K-12): Audubon Society, Ballona Wetlands Land Trust and Friends of Ballona Wetlands.
- Environmental monitoring: BWC, Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) and City of Los Angeles Environmental Monitoring Division (CLAEMD).
- Invasive species removal: Ballona Wetlands Land Trust and Friends of Ballona Wetlands.
- Natural history and site tours: Ballona Wetlands Land Trust, Friends of Ballona Wetlands and Wetlands Action Network.
- Recreation (organized): Playa Vista Little League Program.
- Recreation (walking, biking, boating and fishing): General public.
- Scientific symposia: Ballona Wetlands Foundation and Friends of Ballona Wetlands.
- Security patrols and trash removal: Ballona Wetlands Land Trust and Trust for Public Land (TPL).
- Special projects and events: Audubon Society, Ballona Wetlands Land Trust and Friends of Ballona Wetlands.

- Water and sediment sampling: Loyola Marymount University (LMU).
- Workdays, maintenance and land management: Ballona Wetlands Land Trust, Friends of Ballona Wetlands and CNLM (limited to the Freshwater Marsh).



Ballona Wetlands, 1941



Aerial of Ballona Wetlands and its surroundings today

Signage



Description

There are more than 50 different kinds of signs around and within the Ballona Wetlands boundaries. Messages range from “No Dumping Allowed,” to “Protect this State Owned Land,” to “Caution: High Pressure Oil Line.”

The signs can be characterized as:

- Locational: “Titmouse Park”

- Prohibitive: “Keep Out, Private Property”
- Warning: “Warning: Mussels; From these waters it is unfit for human consumption...”
- Informational: “State-owned Ballona Wetlands Area”
- Educational: “At the Wetlands, a feathered flock: diving, dabbling, stalking or skimming, the birds of Ballona find an abundance of food...”
- Directional: “Access for Playa Vista Little League enter here”

Trends

Authorized and unauthorized signage has increased, proliferating along perimeter fencing.



Existing signs

Access Points



Broken fence at area A



No fence at area B



Fallen fence at area C



Unlocked gate at area C

The condition of current access points varies from area to area

Description

There are more than 50 formal and informal access points into the wetlands used by the public, non profit organizations, agencies, scientists, institutions and utility companies.

Public

- Informal public access conditions vary from area to area. The overall perimeter is mostly fenced off. Access occurs here through holes in the fence, through unlocked gates, or by simply jumping the fence. The interior of the site, which is unfenced in area B, can be accessed anywhere. However since parking is limited, so is access. The interior of the site in area

C is fenced but the site is easily and regularly accessed through unlocked gates, holes in the fences and openings to nearby residences.

- Formal public access occurs at the baseball fields (both from Culver Boulevard and Ballona Creek) and the perimeter of the Freshwater Marsh. Both locations provide parking.

Community Non Profits

- Ballona Wetlands Land Trust accesses the site at a variety of locations for trash pick-up, invasive species removal, native plant sales and educational events.
- Friends of Ballona Wetlands, Wonders of Wetlands (WOW) and Audubon Society access the site from behind Gordon's Market, along the dunes trail, and along Ballona Creek for a variety of educational events, dune restoration and bird counts.
- BWC and CNLM access the site at the Marsh. BWC also accesses the site at the intersection of Culver/Jefferson Boulevards and at the Culver loop for Best Management Practices (BMP) maintenance, and at the Freshwater Marsh outfall access road for marsh maintenance.

Tribal Consultation and Coordination

- Members of the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, indigenous to the L.A. Basin, consider the Ballona Wetlands culturally significant. Their access to cultural resources needs to be preserved through formal and informal consultation and coordination.

Agencies

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (LADPW), City of Los Angeles (CLA) and CLAEMD access the site from behind Gordon's Market, the dunes trail along Ballona Creek, and at the Freshwater Marsh. L.A. County also accesses the site at Culver loop and at the Freshwater Marsh outfall access road.

Institutions, Utilities and Other Land Owners

- The Gas Company accesses the site from behind Gordon's Market, the dunes trail, along Ballona Creek and at the Freshwater Marsh.
- Playa Capital Company accesses the site at the intersection of Culver/Jefferson Boulevards for BMP maintenance, at the Freshwater Marsh outfall access road, the entire Freshwater Marsh, southern portion of the marsh under construction, Lincoln Boulevard slope construction and Culver loop for BMP maintenance.
- LMU accesses the site from behind Gordon's Market and along Ballona Creek for research and monitoring.

Trends

Authorized users generally utilize consistent and clearly marked entry points, whereas unauthorized users tend to exhibit more opportunistic methods of access, including climbing under and over dilapidated or vandalized fencing and through holes.



Informal access by neighbors



Damage by BMX riders

Access Modes



Existing access modes

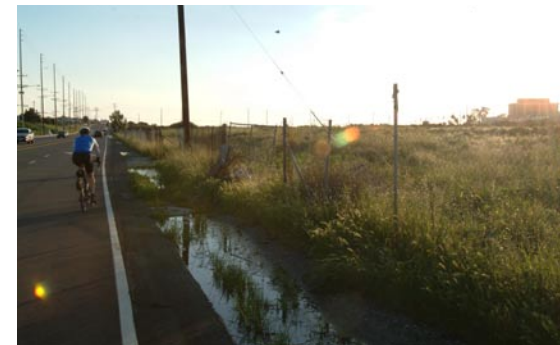
- Informal on-site bike access occurs in areas A and C, mostly by BMX riders.



Class I bike path at Ballona Wetlands



Challenging bike path entrance/exit at Lincoln Boulevard



Difficult riding conditions along Culver Boulevard

Description

Bicycle-Related

- East/west bicycle access is provided via off-street (Class I) bikeway along the northern levee of Ballona Creek Channel.
- Entry points to the Ballona Creek bikeway occur at the end of McConnell, at Lincoln Boulevard and at the end of Fiji Way. Access at Lincoln

Boulevard is dangerous.

- North/south bicycle access is provided via on-and off-street (Class I and II) coastal bike trail.
- There is a lot of bicycle parking located at Fisherman's Village. Bicycle parking elsewhere is non-existent and results in bikes being locked to fences along the perimeter of the planning area.
- Culver and Jefferson Blvd. are used by bicycles even though the conditions are challenging.

Transit-Related

- Santa Monica Big Blue Bus #3 and MTA Buses #108, #115 and #220 provide bus access to the wetlands.
- Bus stops near the planning area are generally uncovered and do not contain informative or interpretive information regarding Ballona Wetlands.
- Ballona Wetlands as a destination is not integrated into information packets supplied by Transit providers.
- Bus stop locations do not currently include secure bike parking or trash receptacles.



Bus stop at Lincoln and Jefferson Boulevards

Automobile-Related

- Automobile access is via large arterial roadways in the project area and occasional cul-de-sacs in multi-family residential areas to the west and north.
- Existing demand for parking of vehicles is largely driven by off-site parking supply available to surrounding uses (e.g. Gordon's Market, Fisherman's Village, etc.)
- On-site parking is limited to paved on-street parking along Jefferson Boulevard, at the Little League Ball Fields, and unpaved parking in isolated areas along Culver Boulevard.



Existing parking at Fisherman's Village parking lot

Trends

- As neighborhood land uses intensify, vehicle parking demands will increase without commensurate increases in supply.
- Existing under-utilized parking lots will see greater demands during average and peak period times.
- Illegal and destructive bicycle access into and within the wetlands by BMX riders is a problem.
- The lack of visitation by transit riders will continue unless they are made aware of the resources and opportunities within the wetlands.
- Fisherman's Village will likely redevelop and bikeway improvements are planned adjacent and to the west and north of area A.



Damage by BMX riders in area A

Security, Litter and Trash Management

Description

- Wind-blown trash enters the wetland and accumulates on existing fencing, depending upon prevailing winds. Blowing Styrofoam further pollutes the natural habitat with non-biodegradable materials.
- Areas where homeless populations congregate experience a greater level of trash and litter than other areas.
- Illegal dumping and trash disposal occurs on an occasional basis in proximity to informal access points.
- Discontinuous, deteriorating and vandalized fencing allows for uncontrolled access to sensitive wetland areas.
- Wild animals and birds become entwined in litter including six-pack rings, fishing line and plastic bags.
- Frequent trash pick-up work days are being sponsored by community non profits such as Ballona Wetlands Land Trust to clean up the area.
- Limited budget and personnel resources preclude regular patrols and management by the DFG.
- Daily vehicle security guard provided by the TPL.

Trends

- Having a single TPL security guard for the wetlands results in insufficient manpower to cover the acreage of the property.
- Blowing trash continues to pose a problem along the perimeter of the property and particularly along the Ballona Creek Channel.



Wind-blown trash along fencing



Dumping in the wetland destroys habitat



Ballona Wetlands Land Trust clean-up adjacent to the creek



Homeless encampments are common sources of trash

Activities/Uses



Description

Invasive Species Removal

- Currently, invasive species removal throughout the wetlands is limited. The most problematic plant species are chrysanthemum, pampas grass, castor bean and iceplant.

Dune Restoration

- Ongoing dune restoration projects include non-native plant removal and native dune plant revegetation.
- Complementary efforts are underway to restore beach and dune bluffs from Ballona Wetlands to the Palos Verdes Peninsula.
- Neighboring off-leash dogs pose a problem for native dune revegetation efforts.



Pampas grass needs to be removed



Castor bean removal



Native dune plants after restoration

Saltwater Marsh Enhancements (area B)

- Trash pick-up and clean-up days are performed by a number of organizations and agencies in the marsh and adjacent creek.
- Bird count surveys are taken monthly within the marsh and adjacent creek.
- Water and sediment sampling occurs in the marsh.
- There is frequent monitoring of post-tide gate construction.
- Limited invasive species removal occurs in area B, including iceplant and pampas grass.



Saltwater Marsh

Freshwater Marsh Enhancements (area B)

- There is ongoing Freshwater Marsh revegetation and habitat enhancement.
- Bird count surveys are conducted frequently.
- Water and sediment sampling occurs in the marsh.
- There is regular monitoring of post-tide gate construction at the Freshwater Marsh outfall.



Freshwater Marsh

Upland Enhancements- Coastal Sage Scrub, Southern Fore Dune and Non-native Annual Grassland

- Trash pick-up and clean-up days occur monthly in areas A and C.
- Limited invasive species removal occurs in areas A and C including castor bean and chrysanthemum.
- Unauthorized BMX use is damaging habitat in areas A and C.



BMX jumps in area C

Education Programs

- There are self-guided interpretive tours along the perimeter of the Freshwater Marsh on Jef-

erson and Lincoln Boulevards.

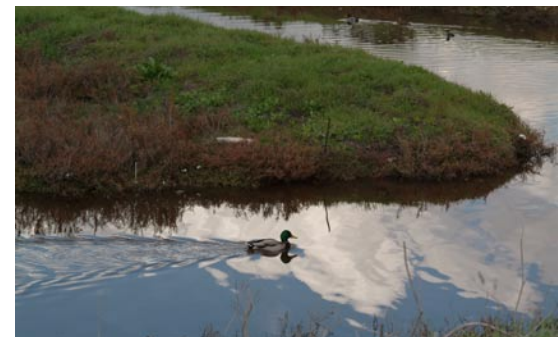
- Organized tours of the Saltwater Marsh occur on a regular basis.
- School field trips, tours, environmental education programs and special events are organized by a number of community non profits in areas A, B and C.



On-going education programs

Scientific Sampling and Data Collection

- Water and sediment sampling occurs in the Saltwater and Freshwater Marshes.
- There is regular monitoring of post-tide gate construction at the Saltwater Marsh and Freshwater Marsh outfall.
- Bird count surveys are conducted at the Saltwater Marsh and the Freshwater Marsh.



Bird watching

Hiking and Walking

- There are self-guided interpretive tours along perimeter of the Freshwater Marsh.
- Informal dogwalking (mostly off-leash) occurs in areas A, B and C, but is most prevalent in area C.
- There are informal hiking trails throughout areas A, B and C.



Informal hiking trails in area A

Biking

- East/west bicycle access is provided via off-street (Class I) bikeway along the northern levee of Ballona Creek Channel.
- North/south bicycle access is provided via the Coastal Bike Trail.



Bike path along Ballona Creek

Fishing and Boating

- Fishing occurs on both sides of the Ballona Creek levee and from the pedestrian bridge.
- UCLA students and birdwatchers kayak and crew in Ballona Creek.



Kayaking

Baseball

- Playa Vista Little League plays baseball on the three fields located in area C.



Little League baseball field

Homeless Camping

- Numerous homeless encampments exist within the wetlands, particularly in the coastal sage scrub of areas A and C.



Homeless camping

Trends

- Community non profit activity is increasing since acquisition, as evidenced by increased requests for access authorization from DFG.
- Freshwater Marsh vegetation and habitat is maturing.
- Increased open space usage is taking place as Playa Vista residents discover the wetlands and its intrinsic values.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Signage



Existing and proposed signage locations

Needs

- Eliminate proliferation of signs.
- Provide new signage with consistent information.
- Leads people to appropriate access points by using directional signage.
- Provide consistent information regarding do's and don'ts of access through the use of informa-

tional signs with coordinated designs.

- Display signage that recognizes stewardship efforts by community groups.
- Post interpretive signs to educate the community.

Recommendations

- Develop consistent statement regarding where and how to access resources and the importance of resource protection.
- Develop Regional Signage
Install announcement signage with mini-map and gateway access points at key locations: (see page 15)
 1. Bike path at western entrance to Ballona Wetlands
 2. Bike path at eastern entrance to Ballona Wetlands
 3. Lincoln Boulevard at Fiji Way
 4. Culver Boulevard and Marina Expressway
 5. Jefferson and Lincoln Boulevards
 6. Culver Boulevard at Nicholson Street
- Minimize unnecessary signage through co-branding, consolidation and strategic placement. Include stewardship logos and names on regional signs.
- Develop Gateway Entrances
Create gateway entrances (gates, etc.) to inform wetland visitors of the “what, where, why and how” at key public access points including:
 1. Bike path at area A
 2. Bike path at area C
 3. Fisherman's Village
 4. Adjacent to Dock 52 parking lot
 5. Culver Boulevard and Marina Expressway
 6. Little League baseball field
 7. Freshwater Marsh
 8. Gordon's Market
 (See the Access Points section for more details)



1. Bike path at western entrance to Ballona Wetlands



2. Bike path at eastern entrance to Ballona Wetlands

***Proposed regional signage
locations along bike paths***

- Develop sign guidelines for activities such as Little League, Ballona Outdoor Learning and Discovery Project (BOLD), Ballona Wetlands Land Trust cleanups, etc.

Off-site linkages

- Coordinate with other public agencies to provide directional and interpretive signage leading from public streets and parking lots to gateway access points (e.g. signs at Pacific Street bridge, Del Rey Lagoon).

***Proposed regional signage
locations along roads***



3. Lincoln Boulevard at Fiji Way



4. Culver Boulevard and Marina Expressway



5. Jefferson and Lincoln Boulevards



6. Culver Boulevard at Nicholson Street

Access Points



Existing and proposed access points

Needs

Current access needs:

- Prohibit or minimize habitat degradation and species harassment through controlled access.
- Direct access to entry points where instructional signage has the greatest chance of being read and understood.
- Reinforce constructive and beneficial uses and conservation practices in strategic locations

through selected access points.

- Provide consistent information that reinforces sensitive activities and access within the wetlands, compatible with resource protection.
- Monitor formal and informal access points to develop strategies for minimizing physical harm to the environment.

Recommendations

- Reduce the total number of access points through a phase-out of inappropriate or uncontrolled access points.
- Coordinate the reduction in access points with the implementation of parking and multi-modal recommendations and neighborhood outreach.

Public

- Develop common gateway entrances for the following proposed and existing public entry points: (see page 17)
 1. Bike path at area A - proposed public access
 2. Bike path at area C- proposed public access
 3. Fisherman's Village - proposed access for the public already parked and using the resources at Fisherman's Village. Also potential education opportunities to a new market.
 4. Adjacent to Dock 52 parking lot - proposed public access with abundant parking.
 5. Culver Boulevard and Marina Expressway - proposed local access to adjacent residential community. Could be used by the general public if an off-site public parking lot is secured.
 6. Little League baseball fields - existing public access with parking.
 7. Freshwater Marsh - existing public access with adjacent street parking
 8. Gordon's Market - existing periodic public access with limited adjacent parking
- Close other informal or unauthorized access points and enforce their closure where possible.



1. Bike path at area A



4. Adjacent to Dock 52 parking lot



7. Freshwater Marsh



2. Bike path at area C



5. Culver Boulevard and Marina Expressway



8. Gordon's Market



3. Fisherman's Village



6. Little League baseball fields

***Proposed public
gateway locations***

- Create citizen monitors to evaluate the effectiveness of access closures and suggest methods of redirecting access.
- Install portable restroom units at selected access points.
- Provide for easily accessible lookout and observation areas for wetland viewing and birding.

Community Non Profits

- Continue to issue permits to community nonprofits for authorized activities in designated areas.

Tribal Consultation and Coordination

- Initiate formal and informal consultations with representatives of the Gabrielino/Tongva Tribal Council to develop guidelines that contribute to the preservation of sacred and cultural sites within the wetland planning area.

Agencies

- Pursue Ecological Reserve Designation. (DFG responsibility)
- Maintain existing access points for authorized activities in designated areas.

Institutions, Utilities and Other Land Owners

- Maintain existing access points for authorized activities in designated areas.
- Minimize vehicle traffic by Gas Company and Vector Control.
- Maintain access across area B to monitor outlet tide gate.

Access Modes



Existing formal and informal parking locations

Needs

- Identify and develop potential overlooks in convenient areas that are accessible by foot, bike and bus so that people have increased visual access to the wetlands.
- Improve bicycle connection to Ballona Creek bike path at Lincoln Boulevard.
- Improve educational signage at bus stops to encourage transit riders to explore the wetland.

- Pursue opportunities for shared parking during non-peak periods.
- Identify staging areas.
- Obtain permission to facilitate van pooling and drop-offs at staging areas.

Recommendations

Bicycle-Related

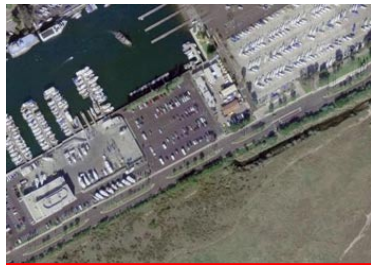
- Coordinate educational and directional signage with construction of Beach and Harbors bikeway adjacent to area A.
- Provide lockable bike racks at authorized access points to each area of the wetlands; post small and simplistic interpretive signage at each bike rack location or integrate with signage proposed elsewhere in this plan.
- Improve bicycle access at Lincoln Boulevard.
- Coordinate bicycle access with gateway entrances.

Transit-Related

- Coordinate the posting of educational and directional signage with Big Blue Bus and MTA at selected bus stops to encourage access via transit.



Big Blue Bus



Adjacent to Dock 52 parking lot



Culver Boulevard and Marina Expressway





Little League baseball field

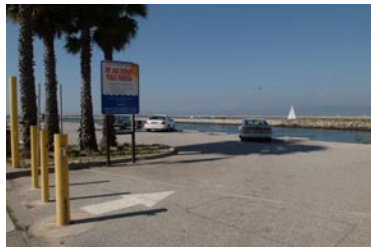


Fisherman's village



 Proposed Gateway Entrances Along Bike Path
 Proposed Gateway Entrances Along Roads

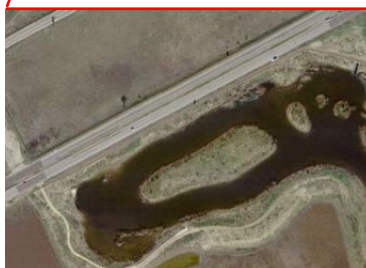
Parking locations



Existing public parking lot



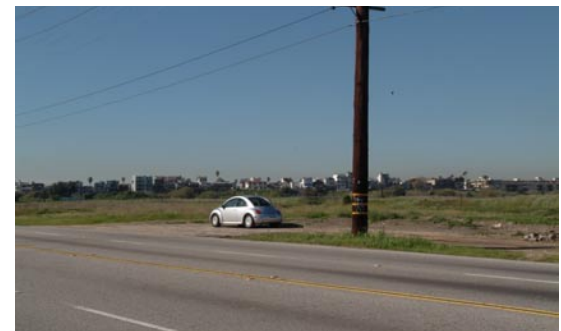
Gordon's Market



Freshwater Marsh

Automobile-Related

- Formalize casual parking areas through parking agreements with adjacent land owners and tenants in order to encourage complementary use of parking during off-peak periods
- Acquire parking easements and agreements near key access points and provide limited parking for visitors
- Experiment with preferential parking spaces for car- and van-pools in selected locations
- Coordinate group visits with remote parking areas through shuttles and van-pooling.
- Monitor peak parking demand periods to minimize adverse impacts to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Enforce existing regulations and ordinances with regard to abandoned vehicles and overnight parking in key locations.
- Coordinate parking with gateway entrance at the following areas:
 - Fisherman's Village
 - Adjacent to Dock 52 parking lot
 - Culver Boulevard and Marina Expressway
 - Little League baseball fields
 - Freshwater Marsh
 - Gordon's Market
 - Public parking at pedestrian bridge



Informal parking areas

Security, Litter and Trash Management

Needs

- Increase frequency of trash pick-up days.
- Reduce trash source by educating boaters and visitors within Marina Del Rey and fishermen along Ballona Creek Channel.
- Identify problem areas and devise visitor friendly means of litter reduction.
- Repair and install fencing in targeted problem areas along the periphery of the site.

Recommendations

- Develop consistent documentation of volunteer time spent during work days addressing litter and trash issues to facilitate agency qualification for revenue sharing and federal funding.
- Provide for more frequent California Conservation Corps activity with regard to fence repair and replacement, and trash pick-up.
- Seek funds to volunteer organizations to encourage additional clean-up days at selected times of the year.



Ballona Wetlands Land Trust Stewards on a clean-up day



CCC works with Ballona Wetlands Land Trust on trash days



One month's worth of trash

Activities/Uses



Invasive species, castor bean removal



Invasive species removal

Dune Restoration (area B)

- Increase habitat creation for threatened and Endangered species.
- Restore the area north of Gordon's Market parking lot to dune habitat.



Recently planted native dune vegetation

Recommendations

Invasive Species Removal (area-wide)

- Continue and expand invasive species removal efforts by Ballona Wetlands Land Trust and Friends of Ballona Wetlands.
- Increase pampas grass, chrysanthemum, iceplant and castor bean removal efforts in specified areas.

- Continue seasonal non-native seed-head control and eradication.
- Control off-leash dogs and other domestic animals.

Saltwater Marsh Enhancements (area B)

- Continue and, where appropriate, expand environmental monitoring of tidal gate project by L.A. Sanitation District of Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE).
- Increase iceplant and castor bean removal and replanting with native species.



Saltwater Marsh

Freshwater Marsh Enhancements (area B)

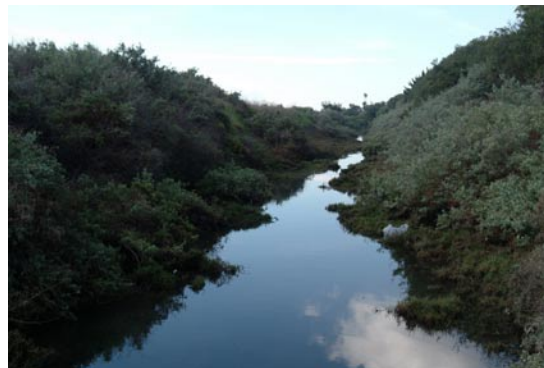
- Maintain perimeter-only access to protect resources.
- Expand pampas grass removal in the Expanded Wetlands Parcel.



Freshwater Marsh

Uplands Enhancements - Coastal Sage Scrub, Southern Fore Dune and Non-native Annual Grassland

- Relocate BMX activity to other more environmentally appropriate site(s).
- Continue invasive species removal.
- Expand trash pick-up and clean-up days.



Area A tidal channel

Education Programs:

- Support an Outreach Coordinator position.
- Expand outreach efforts within public schools.
- Increase public awareness of local resources to be found at Ballona Wetlands.



Students learning about native plant restoration

Scientific Sampling and Data Collection

- Continue and, where appropriate, expand existing programs.



Tide gate

Hiking and Walking

- Coordinate the designation of public trails in sub-locations so as to:
 - further the restoration efforts outlined above,
 - provide for educational/interpretive opportunities,
 - concentrate human activity in non-sensitive areas,
 - allow for access to degraded areas to facilitate habitat restoration.



Self-guided walks

Biking

- Restrict internal bicycle access.
- Coordinate educational and directional signage with construction of Beach and Harbors bikeway adjacent to area A.
- Provide lockable bike racks at authorized access points to each area of the wetlands; post small and simplistic interpretive signage at each bike rack location or integrate with signage proposed elsewhere in this plan.
- Improve bicycle access at Lincoln Boulevard.
- Coordinate bicycle access with areas especially along Culver Boulevard at gateway #5 and along Jefferson Boulevard.



Biking at pedestrian bridge



*Existing bike lane at Fiji Way and
location of proposed future Class I bike path*

Fishing and Boating

- Allow an appropriate level of fishing and boating activity through the Ecological Reserve Designation process.



UCLA Marina Aquatic Center on Ballona Creek Channel

Baseball

- Continue existing level of Little League baseball activity.
- Maintain pervious parking areas to maximize groundwater recharge.
- Encourage use of bike path and associated gateway by field users.



Little League baseball field project

Homeless Camping

- Enlist active patrols and monitoring by the L.A. City Police Department to reduce homeless camping activity.

IV. NEXT STEPS

Signage

- Finalize design for sign types.
- Install regional signage first, then gateway entrances.
- Retire non-conforming signage along perimeter of site.
- Develop and install stewardship/coalition signage.
- State of California to pay for signage disposal.
- SCC pays for sign design and installation as funds are available.

Access Points

- Select/prioritize access points with input from community non profits and agencies.
- Outreach through community non profits.
- Post notice of closure at each to be closed access point and provide map to formal access points.
- Note seasonal closures during nesting season for T & E species.
- DFG/SCC or their contractor to close inappropriate access points.
- DFG/SCC takes lead on access closures.
- Community non profits to monitor to minimize vandalism.
- Permitting to be determined.

Access Modes

- Formalize parking areas where access is to be planned for or encouraged.
- Improve the function of existing parking areas.
- Facilitate access by pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.
- Analyze the need for acquiring parking easements or agreements near key access points.
- Provide lockable bike racks at key access points.
- Enforce existing regulations and ordinances regarding abandoned vehicles and overnight parking.
- Monitor peak parking demands in adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Post educational and directional signage at selected MTA bus stops.
- SCC takes lead on parking easements / agreements.
- Permitting to be determined.

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UCLA
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California Conservation Corps
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City of Los Angeles Environmental Monitoring
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Los Angeles Conservation Corps.
Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and
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Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control
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National Marine Fishery Service
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Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission
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